

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of the Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A semiconductor device comprising:

- a semiconductor substrate of a first conductivity type;
- a first region of a second conductivity type formed on and in direct contact with said semiconductor substrate;
- a second region of the second conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region;
- a third region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region, and surrounding said second region;
- a first electrode portion formed on the surface of said third region located between said first and second regions with an insulating film therebetween;
- a second electrode portion connected to said second region;
- a third electrode portion connected to said first region and spaced by a distance from said third region;
- a fourth region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region between said third electrode portion and said third region;

wherein, a position of an interface between the first region and the fourth region in a depth direction changes for ~~any a cross sections~~ a section crossing a region along a direction substantially orthogonal to the direction of the current flow; and

a ~~sixth~~ fifth region of the second conductivity type formed between the semiconductor substrate of the first conductivity type and the first region of the second conductivity type, the ~~sixth~~ fifth region having an impurity concentration that is higher than the impurity concentration of the first region and extending toward the first region.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A semiconductor device comprising:

a semiconductor substrate of a first conductivity type;

a first region of a second conductivity type formed on and in direct contact with said semiconductor substrate;

a second region of the second conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region;

a third region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region, and surrounding said second region;

a first electrode portion formed on the surface of said third region located between said first and second regions with an insulating film therebetween;

a second electrode portion connected to said second region;

a third electrode portion spaced by a distance from said third region;

a fourth region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region between said third electrode portion and said third region; and

a fifth region of the first conductivity type surrounding said third electrode portion, and formed at and near the surface of said first region,

wherein said third electrode portion is connected to said fifth region, and

wherein ~~a position of an interface between the first region and the fourth region in a depth direction changes for any cross sections crossing a region in which the interface exists along a~~

~~direction of flow of the current, and~~ the position of the interface in the depth direction also changes for ~~any a cross sections~~ section crossing the region along a direction substantially orthogonal to the direction of the current flow.

Claim 3 (original): The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein  
said fourth region is fixed to a constant potential.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 3, wherein  
said fourth region is electrically connected to said second electrode portion.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A semiconductor device comprising:  
a semiconductor substrate of a first conductivity type;  
a first region of a second conductivity type formed on and in direct contact with said semiconductor substrate;  
a second region of the second conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region;  
a third region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region, and surrounding said second region;  
a first electrode portion formed on the surface of said third region located between said first and second regions with an insulating film therebetween;  
a second electrode portion connected to said second region;  
a third electrode portion connected to said first region and spaced by a distance from said third region;  
a fourth region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region between said third electrode portion and said third region;

wherein, ~~a position of an interface between the first region and the fourth region in a depth direction changes for any cross sections crossing a region along a direction substantially orthogonal to the direction of the current flow;~~

the semiconductor device comprises a plurality of said fourth regions, and

said plurality of fourth regions are spaced from each other by a distance allowing connection between depletion layers extending from neighboring said fourth regions, respectively, in an on state; and

a ~~sixth~~ fifth region of the second conductivity type formed between the semiconductor substrate of the first conductivity type and the first region of the second conductivity type, the ~~sixth~~ fifth region having an impurity concentration that is higher than the impurity concentration of the first region and extending toward the first region.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 5, wherein assuming that said first region has an impurity concentration of  $N_A$ , said fourth region has an impurity concentration of  $N_D$ , the neighboring fourth regions are spaced by a distance of  $W$ , a required breakdown voltage is  $V$ , an amount of charges is  $q$ , a dielectric constant of the vacuum is  $\epsilon$ , a relative dielectric constant of silicon is  $\epsilon'$ , and the impurity concentration  $N_A$  is sufficiently larger than the impurity concentration  $N_D$ , and is substantially infinite, the following formulas are satisfied:

$$V > qN_D W^2 / (8\epsilon\epsilon')$$

$$W < 2(2V\epsilon\epsilon' / (qN_D))^{(1/2)}.$$

Claim 7 (original): A semiconductor device comprising:

a semiconductor substrate of a first conductivity type;

a first region of a second conductivity type formed on and in direct contact with said semiconductor substrate;

a second region of the second conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region;

a third region of said first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region, and surrounding said second region;

a first electrode portion connected to said third region;

a second electrode portion connected to said second region;

a third electrode portion spaced from said third region by a distance, and connected to said first region; and

a fourth region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region between said third electrode portion and said third region;

said fourth region having a depth changing as a position moves in a direction crossing a direction of flow of the current.

Claim 8 (original): The semiconductor device according to claim 7, wherein said fourth region is fixed to a constant potential.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 8, wherein said fourth region is electrically connected to said first electrode portion.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A semiconductor device comprising:

a semiconductor substrate of a first conductivity type;

a first region of a second conductivity type formed on and in direct contact with said semiconductor substrate;

a second region of the second conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region;

a third region of said first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region, and surrounding said second region;

a first electrode portion connected to said third region;

a second electrode portion connected to said second region;

a third electrode portion spaced from said third region by a distance, and connected to said first region; and

a fourth region of the first conductivity type formed at and near the surface of said first region between said third electrode portion and said third region;

~~said fourth region having a depth changing as a position moves in a direction crossing a direction of flow of the current, and~~

said fourth region comprises a plurality of discretely formed regions, and the neighboring fourth regions are spaced from each other by a distance allowing connection between depletion layers extending from the neighboring fourth regions, respectively, in an on state.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 10, wherein

assuming that said first region has an impurity concentration of  $N_A$ , said fourth region has an impurity concentration of  $N_D$ , the neighboring fourth regions are spaced by a distance of  $W$ , a required breakdown voltage is  $V$ , an amount of charges is  $q$ , a dielectric constant of the vacuum is  $\epsilon$ , a relative dielectric constant of silicon is  $\epsilon'$ , and the impurity concentration  $N_A$  is sufficiently larger than the impurity concentration  $N_D$ , and is substantially infinite, the following formulas are satisfied:

$$V > qN_D W^2 / (8\epsilon\epsilon')$$

$$W < 2(2V\epsilon\epsilon' / (qN_D))^{(1/2)}.$$

Claim 12 (previously presented): The semiconductor device of claim 1, wherein the fourth region is a continuous region having changing depths in a direction crossing a direction of current flow.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The semiconductor device of claim 7, wherein the fourth region is a continuous region having changing depths in a direction crossing a direction of current flow.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein the first region is configured to have a region that is not depleted by a depletion layer extending from the fourth region in an on state.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein the fourth region is spaced apart from the third region.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 5, wherein the fourth region is spaced apart from the third region.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 7, wherein the fourth region is spaced apart from the third region.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The semiconductor device according to claim 10, wherein the fourth region is spaced apart from the third region.